

Section I:

Cooperative Education Programs



Description of Cooperative Education

Cooperative education is a method of instruction that combines in-class instruction with on-the-job training experiences to help students prepare for or explore their career cluster/pathway objectives.

Cooperative education is limited to students who have reached the legal employment age (16 years) and who are classified as high school juniors or seniors. (Indiana Bureau of Child Labor, Teen Worker Bulletin)

Students should use part of the school day and may use some hours after school to build skills relating to their career cluster/pathway objectives.

Students shall be employed an average of not less than fifteen (15) hours per week during the school year. ([511 IAC 8-2-Sec. 5-\(6\)](#))

Instruction is developed and conducted in consultation with employers, employees, or groups of employers and employees having skills in and substantive knowledge of the job or occupational field represented by the students' career cluster/pathway objectives. Students' employment conforms to federal, state, and local child labor laws and regulations.

Cooperative education links the employer and the school in an effort to assist students in becoming well-rounded citizens. The program is supervised, directed, and coordinated by teacher/coordinators under the direction of the local education agency.

The cooperative education teacher/coordinator must meet career and technical education licensing requirements. <http://www.doe.in.gov/dps/licensing/assignmentcode/welcome.html>

The variety and the number of career clusters/pathways represented in cooperative education programs will vary from year to year depending upon the career interests of the students and the availability of suitable training stations.

Major Components

The major components of a quality cooperative education program are:

- [Related class instruction](#), [on-the-job training experience](#), and [Career and Technical Student Organizations \(CTSO\)](#) co-curricular participation.
- Organized and functioning [advisory committee](#) with meetings held each year.
- Paid job placements where students utilize acquired skills and develop new skills relevant to the workplace.
- Licensed teacher/coordinators with appropriate occupational experience to provide planned, supervised instruction.
- Appropriate number of students to enable the teacher/coordinator to place and supervise students. ([See teacher/coordination time](#))
- [Training station supervisors](#) to share occupational expertise with students.
- Individualized, written [training plans](#) to correlate the [related class instruction](#) with [on-the-job training](#).
- Formal and informal evaluations of student progress on the job, including feedback and follow-up, to assist learners in improving performance.

- Parents/guardians who have a full understanding of their responsibilities in the cooperative education program.
- Systematic one-year and five-year follow-up studies of cooperative education program graduates.
- Instruction in all aspects of the career cluster/pathway students are exploring, which provides a broad base of knowledge of the business operation, including management, finances, wellness, and safety.
- Strong commitment to cooperative education by school administration.

Starting a Cooperative Education Program

Before starting a cooperative education program, the need for and interest in a program must be established.

A survey of business, industry, and labor in the community is necessary to determine the potential support for the program. A survey of students also helps determine if there is interest in such a program. The school's ability to meet the needs and requirements of the program must also be considered. A few of the requirements include hiring a licensed teacher and having adequate staffing to support the program.

Once the surveys are compiled and results show there is both need and interest in the program, the school corporation should:

1. Organize an [Advisory Committee](#).
2. Secure application for the program from the Indiana Department of Education website. (<http://ideanet.doe.state.in.us/octe/>)
3. Work with the area vocational (CTE) director to sign off on the program application.
4. Notify the Indiana Department of Education and the Indiana Department of Workforce Development no later than August 1 of the school year that the program will be implemented by returning the application and attaching advisory committee members and minutes.

After completion of steps one and two, the school corporation may proceed as follows:

- Meet with the Advisory Committee to discuss survey results
- Examine the requirements for cooperative education programs (make sure local, state, and federal laws are followed, implement state program standards into curriculum, etc.)
- Visit a school corporation with an established program
- Determine class size keeping in mind that the teacher/coordinator must conduct site visits
- Meet with business, industry, and/or labor to develop appropriate work sites
- Gather necessary materials for program implementation such as textbooks, forms, equipment, and other resources
- Determine the feasibility of Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSO)
- Develop a course outline
- Determine the responsibilities of all persons involved
- Work with guidance department and recruit students for the program

State Program Standards for Cooperative Education

The following program standards form the foundation for cooperative education programs in Indiana.

Cooperative Education Program Standards

1. Quality cooperative education programs consist of three components:
 - [Related class instruction](#)
 - [On-the-job training experience](#)
 - [Career and Technical Student Organization \(CTSO\)](#) co-curricular participation
2. Cooperative education programs have organized and functioning advisory committees that meet regularly each year.
3. Cooperative education programs integrate classroom instruction with on-the-job training specific to students' career cluster/pathway goals and related CTSO activities.
4. Effective cooperative education programs provide systematic student evaluation based on performance on the job and in the related class.
5. Quality cooperative education programs meet minimum time standards established by the State. ([511 IAC 8-2-Sec. 5-\(6\)](#) and (511 IAC 6-7-Sec. 1-4))
6. Cooperative education is a (CTE) career and technical education program that provides a transition from education to career.

Benefits of Cooperative Education

Students benefit because cooperative education programs:

- Provide a wide variety of career training in a chosen career cluster/pathways in the local community while they attend high school.
- Provide employability skills through an organized plan of training under actual on-the-job conditions.
- Increase the opportunity to secure training at a relatively low cost.
- Integrate application of academic skills to the workplace.
- Provide an opportunity for employment in the community after they complete high school.
- Increase interest in other school subjects because subjects become relevant.
- Increase responsibility and attitudes necessary for individual maturity and job competence.
- Develop safe work habits, positive attitudes, and a strong work ethic.
- Guide them in making intelligent career choices.
- Aid in the development of resumes and portfolios.
- Provide opportunities for school-based and work-based learning.
- Enable a stronger transition from education to career by combining the efforts of employers and school personnel in job training.
- Encourage them to complete their education and allow them to earn income.

Schools benefit because cooperative education programs:

- Provide additional funding.
- Reinforce academic standards.
- Require minimal equipment and supplies.
- Extend educational opportunities beyond the school's physical and financial resources.
- Allow students and teachers to build upon the expertise of skilled individuals in the community who are involved in the training of young people.
- Demonstrate the concept that education is indeed a community-wide responsibility.
- Allow utilization of community resources to expand the curriculum and provide more individualized instruction.
- Enrich the curriculum by providing on-the-job training experiences needed to prepare for specific career cluster/pathways goals.
- Provide a means of evaluating the efficiency and success of the curriculum.
- Increase school support by helping students clarify their career cluster/pathway goals and providing a practical means of achieving them.
- Provide school personnel the opportunity to stay current with changes in the workplace as technology continues to change the way we work and live.

- Use the facilities of cooperating employers in the community as laboratories for practical training.
- Encourage a closer partnership between school and community.
- Enhance the students' understanding of interpersonal communication skills in the work environment.

Employers benefit because cooperative education programs:

- Provide students a thorough understanding of job-related theory and knowledge.
- Reduce training costs by facilitating students' transition from school to career.
- Provide highly motivated part-time workers who are receptive to instruction.
- Facilitate better communication between school and community.
- Provide an opportunity to improve community good will.
- Allow participation in planning the training for the student.
- Provide an opportunity to train prospective employees.

Parents/guardians benefit because cooperative education programs:

- Enable their child to make the transition from school to career within the protective environment the school provides.
- Enhance academic performance as students gain a better understanding of the relevance of their education as it relates to the world of work.
- Enable them to participate in the learning process as they share their experiences, participate as volunteers, or mentor local students at their work sites.
- Provide an opportunity for communication with their child because the work experience provides common ground for discussion.
- Stress the value of continuing education and post-secondary training.

Communities benefit because cooperative education programs:

- Introduce local employment opportunities to students.
- Encourage students to seek employment in their community.
- Provide constant labor resources.
- Provide better community-school relations.
- Provide the ability to satisfy labor market needs.